

# Hotel Online

## News for the Hospitality Executive

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## Hotel Sales Professionals: Would You Buy What You Are Selling?

*David M. Brudney, ISHC, December, 2010*

I authored a series devoted to a number of lessons covering the basics of direct selling for this new generation of hotel sales professionals. *Note: if interested, all of those articles may be found on my website ([davidbrudney.com](http://davidbrudney.com)) and a two-part compendium was published in Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International's Marketing Review ([hsmi.org](http://hsmi.org)).*

Looking back, one of the lessons I failed to address was the vital role that self-confidence plays when selling to today's meeting, convention and incentive group decision makers.

A recent visit to the office of James E. Bates, M.D, reminded me of just how important confidence is when making a decision on any major purchase.

Dr. Bates was the orthopedic surgeon who performed my total hip-replacement operation. I made an appointment with him because of my concern over recent reports of recalls and repairs from hip-replacement surgeries.

As he began to address my concerns - - after taking x-rays and then reassuring me with facts that those reports had no relevance on my procedure - - I was reminded of how comfortable I became with him when I first began interviewing surgeons prior to my operation.

Everything he did - - the way he looked, the way he spoke, and what he said - - helped convince me he was the surgeon I wanted. He was so confident, so straightforward and so honest. I felt very safe in Dr. Bates' hands. And yes, it did help that he had performed

hundreds of similar operations before.

My confidence in him is even stronger today because it has now been four years since my surgery and I could not be more satisfied with the results. I would recommend him without qualification. He's the best in my book.

Leaving his office after our recent consultation, I found myself wondering how many hotel sales professionals display Dr. Bates' level of self-confidence. How many meeting and event planners hold that same degree of confidence and high regard for today's hotel sales professionals?

I wonder how many planners would entrust that important meeting or event in the hands of any new or even veteran hotel sales professional. Can the hotel sales professional be relatively new to the business, or must it be only those client-tested who deliver consistently?

True, experience cannot be microwaved - - experience can only be developed over time. But can you microwave confidence? I believe that confidence comes only at a time when *you* would buy what you are selling.

Here's where confidence really comes into play for any hotel sales professional:

- Not hesitating in calling that prospect again when calls have not been returned
- Giving a prospect a compelling reason for making that first appointment with you
- Finding any intersection that will get you in front of that important new prospect
- Asking that probing question that begs to be asked
- Having the self-control to listen intently - - knowing that you are still in control of the sales call
- Having patience and discipline when all the prospect wants is to talk rates
- Overcoming real objections
- Knowing when and where to ask for the business

A few tips on how you can build confidence on the job:

- Understand both the strengths and weaknesses of your location through the eyes of the meeting and event planner
- Understand what planners need, why and when they are receptive to buying

- Have an intimate knowledge of your hotel and its facilities, services, and pricing
- Have an intimate knowledge of your competition's strengths and weaknesses
- Evaluate what has been most and least effective in your sales presentations
- Think of where, when and why have you had your best selling success
- Listen to and grade a recording of a typical voice message you leave
- Build on early successes by developing your own "ambassador" file of those planners that repeat book with you, and sing your praises to other planners

Again, ask yourself . . . would I buy what I'm selling?

True, there is no way to microwave experience. Experience requires putting in the time, fighting in the trenches, learning from both mistakes and successes. Never overlook the value of experience. Acquiring confidence in yourself and your work, however, can come sooner. Follow some of the tips I've suggested and see what it does for you.

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